

Overview of Career Development Theories

Career Development is a “continuous lifelong process of developmental experiences that focuses on seeking, obtaining and processing information about self, occupational and educational alternatives, life styles and role options” (Hansen, 1976). **Put another way, career development is the process through which people come to understand them as they relate to the world of work and their role in it.**

This career development process is where an individual fashions a work identity. In America, we are what we do, thus it becomes a person’s identity. It is imperative when educating our young people that our school systems assist and consider the significance of this responsibility for our youth and their future. The influences on and outcomes of career development are one aspect of socialization as part of a broader process of human development.

Why Study Theory?

Theories and research describing career behavior provide the “conceptual glue” for as well as describe where, when and for what purpose career counseling, career education, career guidance and other career interventions should be implemented.

The process of career development theory comes from four disciplines:

- Differential Psychology- interested in work and occupations
- Personality- view individuals as an organizer of their own experiences
- Sociology- focus on occupational mobility
- Developmental Psychology- concerned with the “life course”

“Theory is a picture, an image, a description, a representation of reality. It is not reality itself. It is a way we can think about some part of reality so that we can comprehend it” (Krumboltz)

Career Development Theories for the past 75 years fall into four categories:

1. Trait Factor - Matching personal traits to occupations-Frank Parson’s (1920’s)
2. Psychological - Personality types matching work environment- Holland (1980’s)
3. Decision - Situational or Sociological- Bandura (Self Efficacy-1970’s)
4. Developmental - Self Concept over life span-Super (1950’s)

Holland Theory of Vocational Types

This approach gives explicit attention to behavioral style or personality types as the major influence in career choice development. This is described as structurally interactive.

Common Themes:

- Occupation choice is an expression of personality and not random
- Members of an occupational group have similar personalities
- People in each group will respond to situations and problems similarly
- Occupational achievement, stability and satisfaction depends on **congruence** between one's personality and job environment

6 Holland Types

Realistic - work with hands, machines, tools, active, practical, adventurous

High traits - practical, masculine, stable

Low traits - sensitive, feminine, stable

Occupations - construction, farming, architecture, truck driving, mail carrier

Investigative – thought, analytical approaches, explore, knowledge, ideas, not social

High traits – scholarly, intellectual, critical

Low traits – powerful, ambitious, adventurous

Occupations – biologist, chemist, dentist, veterinarian, programmer

Artistic – literary, musical, artistic activities, emotional, creative, open

High traits – expressive, creative, spontaneous

Low traits – orderly, efficient, conventional, social, masculine

Occupations – artist, musician, poet, interior designer, writer

Social – train, inform, educate, help, supportive, avoid technical skills, empathy, relationships

High traits – cooperative, friendly, humanistic

Low traits – ambitious, creative, strong,

Occupations – social work, counseling, police officer, LPN

Enterprising – verbally skilled, persuasive, direct, leader, dominant

High traits – ambitious, adventurous, energetic

Low traits – intellectual, creative, feminine

Occupations – lawyer, business executive, politician, TV producer

Conventional – rules and routines, provide order or direct structure, great self control, respect power and status, punctual, orderly

High traits – stable, efficient, dependable, controlled

Low traits – intellectual, adventurous, creative

Occupations – bank teller, clerk typist, cashier, data entry

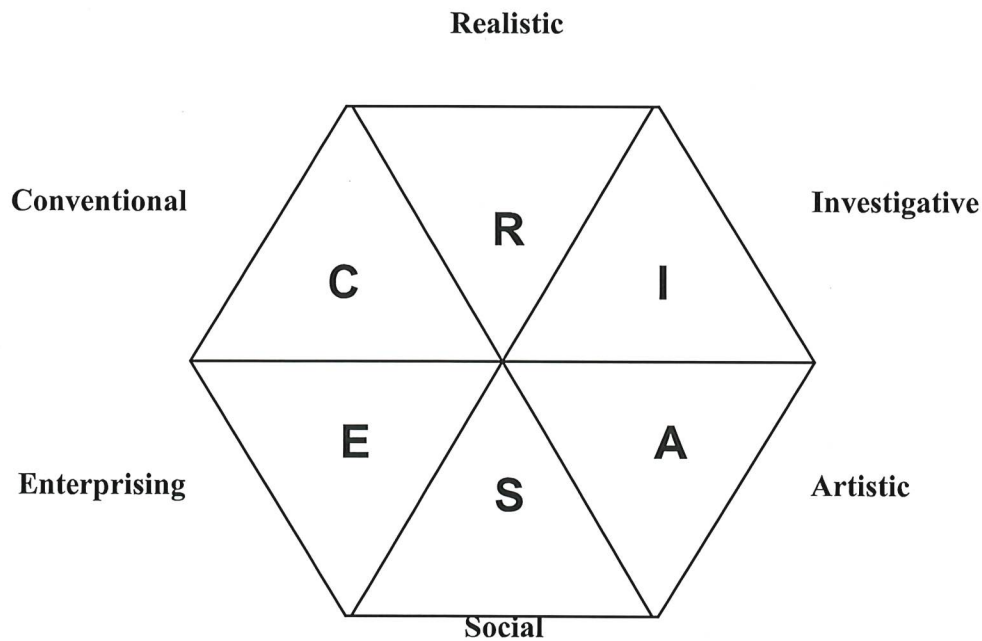
Terms:

Differentiation - the amount of spread between one's first and second code letters; denotes how clear one's type is.

Incongruence – lack of fit between one's type and work environment. People leave jobs because of too much incongruence or because of a chance to increase their congruence. Best decision makers are I's; worst are C's.

Consistency – closeness on the hexagon of one's first and second choices. The higher one's consistency, the more integrated one's characteristics (values, interests, traits) and the greater one's vocational maturity, persistence and achievement.

Holland Types are usually expressed in 3 letters- Ex: RIA



Most Masculine Types -- R & E
Most Feminine Types -- A & S

Most Prestigious Types -- I & E
Least Prestigious Types -- R & C

Over 450 research studies, Holland Types appear to be stable over time and across gender and racial lines.

Advantages of Holland Types for Career Counseling

Types are intuitively appealing and easily shared with students. Helps students get oriented to the worlds of work that isn't overwhelming. Provides helpful way of understanding varied work environments.

Disadvantages of Holland Types for School Counseling

Theory doesn't provide insights into how one develops a type or guidance for working with student.

Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory

The concept of self efficacy is the focal point of Albert Bandura's social cognitive theory. By means of the self system, individuals exercise control over their thoughts, feelings, and actions. Among the beliefs with which an individual evaluates the control over his/her actions and environment, self-efficacy beliefs are the most influential predictor of human behavior. The level and strength of self-efficacy will determine:

- whether coping behavior will be initiated;
- how much effort will result;
- how long the effort will be sustained in the face of obstacles.

Self-Efficacy - the belief in one's capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to produce given attainments- is constructed on the basis of:

Four most influential sources where self-efficacy is derived:

- Personal Performance - Accomplishments-previous successes or failures (most influential)
- Vicarious Experience - Watching others, modeling, mentoring
- Verbal Persuasion - Verbal encouragement or discouragement
- Physiological and Emotional Factors - Perceptions of stress reactions in the body

Self-Efficacy plays the central role in the cognitive regulation of motivation, because people regulate the level and distribution of effort they will expend in accordance with the effects they are expecting from their actions.

It is important to understand the distinction between Self Esteem and Self Efficacy.

- Self esteem relates to a person's sense of self worth.
- Self efficacy relates to a person's perception of their ability to reach a goal.

How Self Efficacy Affects Human Function

Choices regarding behavior-People will be more inclined to take on a task if they believe they can succeed. People generally avoid tasks where their self efficacy is low, but engage when it is high. Self efficacy significantly higher than ability can lead to psychological damage. Significantly low self efficacy leads to an inability to grow and expand skills. Optimum levels of self efficacy are a little above ability, which encourages people to tackle challenging tasks and gain valuable experience.

Motivation- People with higher self efficacy in a task are likely to expend more effort and persist longer than with low efficacy. On the other hand, low self efficacy may provide an incentive to learn more and prepare better than a person with higher self efficacy.

Thought Patterns and Responses- Low self efficacy can lead people to believe tasks are harder than they actually are. This leads to poor planning and stress. A person with higher self efficacy will attribute a failure to external factors, whereas a person with lower self efficacy will attribute it to low ability. (Example: Math Test)

The Destiny Idea- Bandura successfully showed that people with differing self-efficacy perceive the world in fundamentally different ways. People with a high self efficacy are generally of the opinion that they are in control of their own lives: that their own actions and decisions shape their lives. On the other hand, people with low self-efficacy may see their lives as somewhat out of their hands and with fate.

Efficacy vs. Outcome Expectations

Bandura distinguishes between outcome expectancy and efficacy expectancy.

Outcome expectation refers to the person's estimate that a given behavior will lead to particular outcomes.

Efficacy expectation is an estimate that one can successfully execute the behavior required to produce the outcomes sought.

Self-beliefs about abilities play a central role in the career decision-making process. People move toward those occupations requiring capabilities they think they either have or can develop. People move away from those occupations requiring capabilities they think they do not possess or they cannot develop.

Personal goals also influence career behaviors in important ways. Personal goals relate to one's determination to engage in certain activities to produce a particular outcome. Goals help to organize and guide behavior over long periods of time.

The relationship among goals, self-efficacy, and outcome expectations is complex and occurs within the framework of:

Bandura's Triadic Reciprocal Model of Causality – these factors are all affecting each other simultaneously

- personal attributes,
- external environmental factors
- overt behavior

In essence, a person inputs (e.g. gender, race) interact with contextual factors (e.g. culture, family geography) and learning experiences to influence self-efficacy beliefs and outcome expectations.

Self-efficacy beliefs and outcome expectations in turn shape people's interests, goals, actions, and eventually their attainments.

However, these are also influenced by contextual factors (e.g. job opportunities, access to training opportunities, financial resources).

In this theory providing opportunities, experiences and significant adults to impact self-efficacy in all children becomes vital. Strategic career development interventions will positively impact young people in the context of this theory.

Super's Developmental Self-Concept Theory

Vocational development is the process of developing and implementing a self-concept. As the self-concept becomes more realistic and stable, so does vocational choice and behavior. People choose occupations that permit them to express their self-concepts. Work satisfaction is related to the degree that they've been able to implement their self-concepts.

Career Maturity - Similarity between one's actual vocational behavior and what is expected for that stage of development. Career maturity includes readiness to cope with developmental tasks at a given stage. It is both affective and cognitive.

Most career education programs have been affected by Super's ideas. They provide gradual exposure to self-concepts and work concepts in curriculum that represents Super's ideas of career development/vocational maturity. (National Career Development Guideline Standards)

Stages

Growth (Birth to mid teens) - Major developmental tasks are to develop a self-concept and to move from play to work orientation.

Sub stages

- Fantasy (4-10 years old) - needs dominate career fantasies and little reality orientation.
- Interest (11-12 years old) - identifies likes/dislikes as basis for career choices
- Capacity (13-14 years old) - more reality incorporated; can relate own skills to specific requirements of jobs. (Vocationalizing the self concept)

Exploration (Mid teens through early 20's) - major tasks are to develop a realistic self-concept and implement a vocational preference through role tryouts and exploration; there is a gradual narrowing of choices leading to implementation of a preference. Preferences become **CHOICES** when acted upon.

Sub Stages

- Tentative (15-17 years old) - tentative choices incorporating needs, interests, abilities are tried out in fantasy, coursework, part time work, volunteer, shadowing.
 - May identify field and level of work at this sub stage.

- Crystallization of Preference (18-21 years old) - General preference is converted into specific choice. Reality dominates as one enters the job market or training after high school. Choosing a college major or field of training.
- Specifying a Vocational Preference (early 20's) - trial/little commitment; first job is tried out as life's work but the implemented choice is provisional and person may cycle back through crystallizing and specifying if not appropriate.

Establishment (mid 20's through mid 40's) - major tasks are to find secure niche in one's field and advance within it.

Sub Stages

- Trial and Stabilization (25-30 years old) - process of settling down, if unsatisfactory may make 1-2 more changes before the right job is found.
- Advancement (30-40 years old) - efforts directed at securing one's position, acquiring seniority, developing skills, demonstrating superior performance, resume building actions.

Maintenance (40's through early 60's) - Major task is to preserve one's gains and develop non-occupational roles for things one always wanted to do; Little new ground is broken, one continues established work patterns. One faces competition from younger workers. Could be a plateau.

Disengagement or Decline (Late 60's through retirement) - Tasks are deceleration of the career, gradual disengagement from world of work and retirement. One is challenged to find other sources of satisfaction. May shift to part time to suit declining capacities.

Development Tasks

- Crystallization** Forming a general vocational goal
- Specification** Move from tentative to specific preference
- Implementation** Complete training, enter employment
- Stabilization** Confirm choice through work experience
- Consolidation** Advance in career

Implications of Super's Theory for Career Counseling

- Identify the career development stage and set goals for mastery of the tasks unique to each stage.
- Help student clarify self-concept because any task that enhances self-knowledge will increase vocational maturity. Then help them relate their self-knowledge to occupational information.
- Expose students to a wider range of careers because occupational options narrow over time. Consider lifestyle implications and consider the vocational and avocational relevance of subjects studied in school.
- Direct work experiences are vital. Try on roles in real worlds of work.

Supers developmental view of career development in the context of the self allows for changes over time. This is very appropriate in the 21st Century workplace.

Super's Conception of Life Stages and Development Tasks

Growth <i>Beginning at Birth</i> Characteristics	Exploration <i>Around age 14</i> Characteristics	Establishment <i>Around age 25</i> Characteristics	Maintenance <i>Around age 44</i> Characteristics	Decline <i>Around age 60 & up</i> Characteristics
<p>Development of self-concepts through identifying with key figures in family. Begin to learn behaviors associated with self-help, social interaction, self-direction, goal setting, and persistence.</p> <p>Sub stages</p> <p>Fantasy (4-10 yrs) Needs are a priority, fantasy role play is important</p> <p>Interests (11-12 yrs) Likes are key in aspirations and activities</p> <p>Capacity (13-14 yrs) Abilities become clear and important with job requirements being considered.</p>	<p>Self-examination, role try-outs, and exploring of occupations begin to take place in school, during leisure activities, and part-time work.</p> <p>Sub stages</p> <p>Tentative (15-17 yrs) Needs, interests, capacities, values, and opportunities are all considered. Tentative choices are made and tried out. Possible work roles are identified.</p> <p>Crystallizing a Vocational Preference</p> <p>Transitions (18-21 yrs) Realistic considerations become valuable while entering professional training or work force and individual attempts to implement self-concept.</p> <p>Specifying a Vocational Preference</p> <p>Trial-Little Commitment (22-24 yrs) A seemingly appropriate occupation has been found, a first job is tried as potential life work. Commitment is provisional and if not appropriate, the individual may begin process over of crystallizing, specifying and implementing a new preference.</p> <p>Tasks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Choosing a job preference • Developing a realistic self-concept • Learning more about opportunities 	<p>The individual has found their permanent and appropriate field of work. These years are considered to be the most productive and creative years of the life span.</p> <p>Sub stages</p> <p>Trial (with commitment - age 25-30) The individual settles down. During this stage the individual begins to support themselves and their family. They begin to develop a lifestyle, make use of their abilities and past training. They may also begin to become involved in meaningful interests.</p> <p>Advancement (age 31-43)</p> <p>Individuals begin to become more focused on their place in their occupation. They become interested in their security and advancement. They also have the expectation that they will become financially stable and move towards challenging levels of responsibility and independence. This stage may become very frustrating if advancement is not forth coming.</p> <p>Tasks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Becoming stable in a chosen occupation • Consolidating chosen occupation • Advancement 	<p>The individual has already made a place in the world of work, NOW the concern is how to hold on to it:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Little new ground is broken; the individual basically maintains their established work patterns <p>Concerns</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concerned about maintaining present status • Concerned about competition from younger workers in the advancement stage. <p>Tasks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accepting new limitations • Identifying new problems to work on • Developing new skills • Focusing on essential activities • Presentation of achieved status and gains 	<p>During this stage there is a physical and/or mental powers decline. Work activity begins to change or cease. The individual gradually involves themselves in other life roles.</p> <p>Sub stages</p> <p>Disengagement (age 60-64) The individual may begin to ask for their work to be delegated to other individuals. They may also become more selective in what they do or how they participate in activities. With the anticipation of retirement some begin to plan carefully, and others gradually or suddenly become aware of the fact of impending retirement and plan less carefully.</p> <p>Retirement (age 65 & up) Individuals begin to give up their jobs or careers. They begin to immerse themselves in other roles, home life, hobbies, civic activities, and on occasion studies. The cessation of the worker role comes to some very easily and pleasantly and to others with difficulty and disappointment, and to some with death.</p> <p>Tasks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Selective reduction in pace and/or load of work • Planning for retirement • Retirement living

